



August 14, 2023

Hon. Grey Mills, Chair
House Committee on Election Law & Campaign Finance Reform
300 N. Salisbury St., Room 423
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear Chair Mills and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Fair Elections Center, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to removing barriers to registration and voting through advocacy and impact litigation, and the Center's Campus Vote Project, which educates and engages young voters on voting rights issues and institutionalizes civic engagement at university and college campuses, we write to oppose SB 747. Although there are additional provisions in this bill that will harm democratic participation in North Carolina, we write to highlight how the unduly burdensome identification requirements proposed for same-day registration will make it particularly difficult for young, often transient voters to use this process.

Being able to register to vote and cast a ballot in one stop is an important way to mitigate many barriers faced by voters, particularly voters who are a part of traditionally marginalized communities. For example, registering and voting on two separate occasions is difficult for many who lack reliable access to transportation or the necessary financial security to miss work on multiple occasions. Additionally, while convenient for those with drivers licenses who are aware of registration deadlines before they pass, online registration does not reach all citizens due to informational barriers and a lack of state-issued IDs. Same-day registration, however, increases accessibility to voting and has been shown to increase voter turnout. In particular, turnout of voters 18- to 24-years-old has been shown to increase by 3.1 to 7.3 percentage points when same-day registration is available.¹ Increased turnout is critical in states like North Carolina where just 24% of the electorate between 18- and 25-years-old voted in the 2022 midterms.² SB 747 will, however, close the door to same-day registration for many young voters by imposing burdensome and unnecessary identification requirements.

Currently, North Carolina requires a driver's license, other government-issued photo ID, utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, other government document, or an approved college or university photo ID

¹ Jacob M. Grumbach & Charlotte Hill, *Rock the Registration: Same Day Registration Increases Turnout of Young Voters*, 84 JOURNAL OF POLITICS 405 (2021).

² 2022 General Election Turnout, NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS, <https://www.ncsbe.gov/results-data/voter-turnout/2022-general-election-turnout> (last visited Aug. 14, 2023).



along with proof of campus address to register and vote on the same day. SB 747, however, will require prospective voters to show both a photo ID and HAVA document³ containing the same address. For voters with no photo ID with their address, they must show a non-photo ID, a document from the entity that issued the ID showing the voter's address, and a HAVA document showing the same address. If a voter cannot meet these restrictive requirements, they will have to vote a provisional ballot that will only be counted upon providing their county board of elections with the required ID and documents or at least two HAVA documents with matching addresses. Those who are unable to complete this additional step to certify their provisional ballot will not have their vote counted.

The new ID requirements will make it more difficult for North Carolina's students and young people to exercise their right to vote. Students and young people are often far less likely to possess the required documentation and acceptable identification, let alone possess multiple acceptable documents containing their name and address. For example, in 2021, only 60% of 18-year-olds had a driver's license, while over 90% of those over the age of 35 had one.⁴ Many of the HAVA documents required for same-day registration under SB 747—such as utility bills, paychecks, or bank statements with an in-state address—are inaccessible to young, often highly transient populations. Many students relocate to the state months before an election, live in on-campus housing, may not be employed, or may not have their name associated with utility bills in rented or shared residences. Therefore, the additional and duplicative ID requirements make it more likely for eligible voters to be disenfranchised.

Additionally, the new ID requirements imposed by SB 747 are wholly unnecessary—as mentioned previously, North Carolina law already requires prospective voters to present documentation proving their identity and residency before being able to register and vote same-day. Requiring redundant identity verification serves no additional election security purpose, making it clear that the only function of the new requirements is to create barriers to North Carolinians exercising their right to vote.

SB 747 will make same-day registration—a crucially important process to enable young voters, as well as other traditionally marginalized and transient communities, to participate in our democracy—substantially more difficult for many voters by imposing unnecessary and burdensome identification requirements. We strongly oppose this bill for this reason, among others, and urge all members of the Committee to oppose it. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and if you would like further information, please contact me via email at the address listed below.

Sincerely,

Patrick Williamson

Counsel

Fair Elections Center

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³ A “HAVA document” as defined by SB 747 would be any of the following documents showing the name and address of the voter: (1) a current utility bill, (2) a current bank statement, (3) a current government check, (4) a current paycheck, (5) another government document showing the name and address of the voter, or (6) a document from the institution issuing the photo ID showing the name and address of the photo. S.B. 747, 2023 Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (N.C. 2023).

⁴ *Highway Statistics Series*, U.S DEPT. OF TRANSP. (2021), available at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2021/dl20.cfm>.